

Crofton weed

Ageratina adenophora



Crofton weed is an aggressive invasive plant in pastures, valleys, and plateaus in south-eastern Queensland. On wet slopes, it is known to invade kikuyu grass pastures.

Crofton weed is poisonous to horses, causing serious respiratory damage that can cause death.

No method of preventing losses is known, other than denying horses access to crofton weed or refraining from working them hard.

Legal requirements

Crofton weed is not a prohibited or restricted invasive plant under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. However, by law, everyone has a general biosecurity obligation (GBO) to take reasonable and practical measures to minimise the biosecurity risks associated with invasive plants under their control.

Local governments must have a biosecurity plan that covers invasive plants in their area. This plan may include actions to be taken on crofton weed. Some of these actions may be required under local laws. Contact your local government for more information.

Description

Crofton weed is a herb that is perennial, very shrubby with a woody rootstock and numerous upright branching stems. Crofton weed grows up to 2 m high.

Stems are red, dulling with age, and soft, young stems establish roots where they touch the ground. The leaves are bright green, trowel-shaped, 50–75 mm long and 25–50 mm broad, with toothed edges.



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Flowers are white, grow in small, dense heads at the ends of the branches, and are 5–8 mm wide. Seeds are slender, angular, 2 mm long, almost black, and have fine white hairs at the tip.

Habitat and distribution

A native of Chile and Peru, crofton weed was introduced to Australia in 1875 as an ornamental plant but soon spread out of control. Newly cleared land along the New South Wales and Queensland border in the 1940s was soon overrun.

Crofton weed grows in wet, shaded areas, fringing forest and along streams. It favours southerly-facing damp slopes and is found along roadsides and overgrazed pastures.

Life cycle

Crofton weed usually buds in August and flowers from September on, producing many wind-blown ‘seeds’ (achenes). After flowering, the top of the plant senesces and reshoots from the base.

Crofton weed can germinate during wet summer periods and develop into good-sized plants within twelve weeks to flower the following spring.

Control

Chipping out small infestations before flowering is strongly recommended. This prevents the plant from developing into large infestations, which can be very difficult to control.

When plants have died following herbicide spraying, the area should be planted with pasture grasses to provide competition against seedling regrowth. Newly established pastures should not be grazed until they have set seed (about twelve months). Remove any regrowth of crofton weed manually or by high-volume application (spot spray) of a selective herbicide (one that does not damage the pasture) in accordance with Table 1.

Mechanical control

Cultivation, grubbing, hoeing and burning, along with the planting of competitive pastures combined with fertilisation, will control the weed in accessible areas.

Herbicide control

See Table 1 for registered herbicides for control.

Biological control

A stem gall-fly was introduced in 1951 but was heavily parasitised and exerts little impact on plants. A leaf spot fungus (*Cercospora eupatoris*) does exert some effect, especially on seedlings.

More information

More information is available from your local government or visit biosecurity.qld.gov.au.

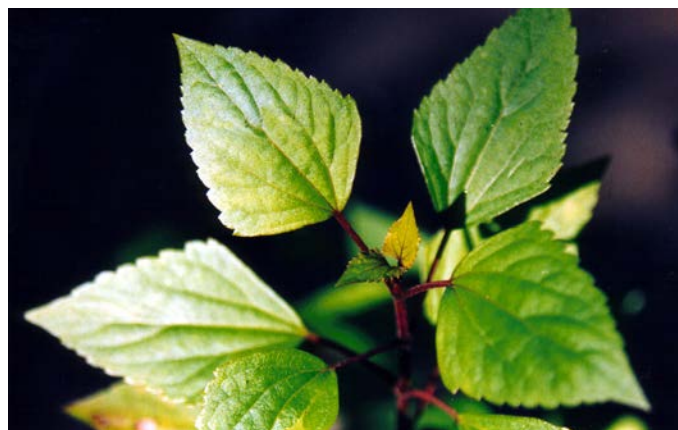


Table 1. Herbicides for the control of crofton weed

Situation	Herbicide	Rate	Comments
Pastures; non-agricultural, commercial land; rights-of-way	Glyphosate 360 g/L (e.g. Glyphosate 360, Weedmaster Duo) and other formulations	500 mL/100 L water For other formulations consult label for correct rate	Handgun application, high volume foliar spray Note: will also kill pasture
		75 mL/ 15 L water For other formulations consult label for correct rate	Knapsack application, high volume foliar spray
Agricultural non-crop areas, commercial and industrial areas, forests, pastures and rights-of-way	Fluroxypyr 200 g/L (e.g. Fluroxypyr 200)	500 mL/100 L water 75 mL/15 L water	High volume spray (hand gun) Knapsack
	Fluroxypyr 333 g/L (e.g. Starane Advanced)	300 mL/100L water 45 mL/15 L water	High volume Knapsack
	Fluroxypyr 400 g/L (e.g. Comet 400)	250 mL/100L water 37 mL/100L water	
Agricultural non-crop areas, commercial and industrial areas, pastures and rights-of-way	2,4-D 300 g/L + picloram 75 g/L (e.g. Tordon 75-D)	650 mL/100 L	High volume spray (hand gun) Knapsack
Agricultural non-crop areas, commercial and industrial areas, forests, pastures and rights-of-way	Triclopyr 300g/L + picloram 100 g/L (e.g. Conqueror) or Triclopyr 300g/L + picloram 100 g/L + aminopyralid 8 g/L (Grazon Extra)	350 mL/100 L water	Apply as thorough foliage spray
		500 mL/10 L water	High concentration/low volume application techniques (gas powered gun, sprinkler sprayer)
		1.5 L/100 mL + 6L 2,4-D amine (625 g/L)	Aerial application Consult label for critical comments
Pastures	MCPA 340 g/L + dicamba 80 g/L (e.g. Kamba M)	2.8–4 L/ha	Boom spray Use higher rate for larger plants Avoid spraying legume pastures
		190–270 mL/100 L water	Handgun
		60 mL/15 L water	Knapsack
Native pastures, rights-of-way, commercial and industrial areas	Metsulfuron methyl 600 g/L (e.g. Associate, Ken-Met 600 WG)	15 g/100 L	High volume spray (hand gun) Knapsack Thoroughly wet all foliage but not to run off
Non agricultural areas (native pastures, commercial and industrial areas, rights-of-way)	Aminopyralid 375 g/kg + metsulfuron methyl 300g/L (Stinger)	30 g/100 L water	High volume spraying (hand gun)
Agricultural non-crop areas, commercial and industrial areas, forests, pastures and rights-of-way	Fluroxypyr 140 g/L + aminopyralid 10 g/L (Hotshot)	700 mL/100 L water	High volume treatment/spot spray
Agricultural non-crop areas, commercial and industrial areas, forests, pastures and rights-of-way	Picloram 240 g/L (e.g. Stuka Flexi) tank mixes with either Triclopyr or 2,4-D	145 mL /100 L water + 175 mL Triclopyr (600g/L)	Foliar spray
		205 mL /100 L water + 310 mL 2,4-D amine (625g/L)	
Native pastures, rights-of-way, commercial and industrial areas	Triclopyr 75 g/L + Metsulfuron-methyl 28 g/L (e.g. Zelam Brush Weed)	375 mL/100 L water	Foliar spray actively growing weeds to bud stage

Note: Overall spray plants to the point of runoff using a power spray or a knapsack preferably at the budding stage of growth.

Read the label carefully before use. Always use the herbicide in accordance with the directions on the label.

